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Office of Policy and Legal Analysis

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OPLA~Notes

Nonpartisan Quarterly Newsletter

March 1998

*Publication of the Office of Policy and Legal Analysis
for the Maine State Legislature*

Volume II, Issue I

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Newsletter Greetings

Welcome to the first edition of OPLA~Notes for 1998, a quarterly publication of the Legislature's nonpartisan Office of Policy and Legal Analysis. Because the Legislature is in the midst of a busy session, we have limited the number of articles in this edition. This issue of OPLA~Notes focuses on legislative studies that were authorized during the First Regular and First Special Sessions of the 118th Legislature and that have now been completed. A summary of each legislative study report issued to date is included. This edition also provides an update on the challenge to California's lifetime term limits and Colorado's "Scarlett Letter" election law. As always, we welcome your comments or suggestions.



Interim Study Commissions: Findings and Recommendations

During the interim between the 1st Special Session and the 2nd Regular Session of the 118th Legislature, the Legislature authorized over 35 studies. The subject matters of these studies ranged from children's health insurance to research and development. The following are summaries of the findings and recommendations made by those study commissions that involved significant legislative participation and that have concluded their work.

Blue Ribbon Commission to Study the Effects of Government Regulation and Health Insurance Costs on Small Businesses in Maine

The Blue Ribbon Commission convened on December 1, 1997. It was chaired by Rep. Arthur Mayo II and included members representing the Legislative and Executive branches, state employees, employee unions and the business sector. The Commission focused its efforts on addressing the effects of health insurance costs on small businesses, but also conducted an initial review of the effects of government regulation on small businesses. The Commission made the following recommendations:

- Add additional criteria for the legislative review process of mandated health insurance benefits;
- Provide tax incentives for small businesses;
- Amend the private purchasing alliances law;

- Provide procedures for the distribution of new rules and laws by State agencies to small businesses;
- Accelerate the phasing in of federal medical savings accounts provisions;
- Require the Business and Economic Development Committee to conduct a periodic review of the Department of Community and Economic Development's one-stop permit center;
- Require joint standing committees to review agency regulatory agendas; and
- Re-establish the Commission to continue its study of government regulation.

Commission to Designate Outstanding Maine Citizens Whose Portraits are to be Displayed in the State House

The Commission convened on January 5, 1998 and included representatives from the Legislature, the Maine State Museum, the State House and Capitol Park Commission and the public. The Commission was charged with designating outstanding Maine citizens, who would be honored by displaying their portraits in the State House. The Commission made its selections from the following categories: business, the arts and literature, science and invention, religion, sports, entertainment, military and maritime, social reform, and scholarship. The Commission chose 20 Maine citizens to be included in the State House Portrait Collection:

- Charles H. Best
- Rachel Carson
- Cornelia Thurza "Fly Rod" Crosby
- Samuel de Champlain
- Dorthea Lynde Dix
- Fannie Hardy Eckstorm
- John Ford
- James Augustine Healy
- Oliver Otis Howard
- Sarah Orne Jewett
- Alvin O. Lombard
- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
- Elijah Parish Lovejoy
- Edna St. Vincent Millay
- Commodore Edward Preble

- Edwin Arlington Robinson
- Louis Francis Sockalexis
- Harriet Beecher Stowe
- Rudy Vallee

Commission to Determine the Adequacy of Services to Persons with Mental Retardation

The Commission convened on September 29, 1997, and was co-chaired by Rep. Randall Berry and Jean Manning. The Commission focused its efforts on evaluating services provided to adults with mental retardation and young adults making the transition from school-based services to adult services. The Commission made the following recommendations:

- Provide funding for mental retardation services, providers and persons with mental retardation who are on waiting-lists for day and residential services;
- Amend the Medicaid waiver to increase customers' flexibility and choice;
- Designate an adult services transition coordinator for each child receiving services;
- Improve public information and education about services for persons with mental retardation;
- Develop options for new day and residential services and supported employment; and
- Continue the development and improvement of the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse's management information system.

Commission to Study the Funding and Distribution of Teletypewriters and Other Telecommunications Equipment for People with Disabilities

The Commission convened on December 5, 1997 and was chaired by Sen. Sharon Treat. The Commission consisted of 12 members who represented the Legislature, the Office of the Public Advocate, advocates for the deaf, advocates for the disabled, telephone companies and the general public. The Commission made the following recommendations:

- Amend the statutory provisions of the Telecommunications Equipment Fund and Telecommunications Equipment Plan to include TTY and other customer premise equipment appropriate to meet the telecommunications needs of individuals with disabilities;
- Ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to telecommunications products and customer premise equipment appropriate to meet their communications needs through the Telecommunications Equipment Plan;
- Provide individuals with disabilities with direct access to TTY and customer premise equipment throughout the State through a comprehensive plan developed by representatives from the Telecommunications Relay Services Advisory Council, the Division of Deafness, and the State's 24 telephone companies that will be presented to the Legislature for approval by January 1, 1999;
- Fund the purchase and distribution of TTY and specialized customer premise equipment using a three-tiered approach, beginning in FY 1998-99;
- Require the Department of Education to make every reasonable effort to ensure that Maine school children have access to TTY and other augmentative communication devices in schools; and
- Reconvene the Commission to continue its work following the adjournment of the Second Regular Session of the 118th Legislature.

Commission to Study the Restructuring of the State's Fiscal Policies to Promote the Development of High-Technology Industry in Maine

The Commission convened in October of 1997 and met six times. It was comprised of individuals representing the Legislature, State government, the academic community, and businesses involved in high-technology or likely to be affected by high-technology development. The Commission focused on the following five science and technology areas targeted by the Maine Science and Technology Foundation: biotechnology, environmental technology, composite technology, information technology, and marine science technology. The Commission made the following recommendations:

- Increase the availability of skilled human resources in Maine;
- Provide access to capital to support high-technology business;
- Expand the funding for research and development programs in Maine;
- Continue the use of current tax incentives for high-technology businesses;
- Require the Maine Science and Technology Foundation and the Department of Economic and Community Development to develop both a complete inventory of high-technology resources and a plan for marketing Maine's potential for high-technology businesses;
- Provide and promote programs for the development of entrepreneurial skills; and
- Establish a state-wide clearinghouse for information and assistance to persons seeking to develop high-tech business in the State.

The Commission also supported the recommendation of the Joint Select Committee on Research and Development that the Legislature appoint a Joint Select Committee on Science and Technology.

Commission to Study the Unemployment Compensation System

The Commission convened on September 24, 1997 and was chaired by Sen. Sharon Treat. The Commission was charged with evaluating the solvency of the Unemployment Compensation Fund and studying the unemployment compensation system to assess whether it is meeting the changing needs of the labor force and the business community. The Commission was unable to agree on all recommendations and issued a majority and a minority report. However, the Commission agreed on the following recommendations:

- Provide a level of financial cushion to protect the Unemployment Compensation Fund against a downturn in the economy;

- Measure reserve levels in the fund in light of the recommendations of the National Advisory Council on Unemployment Compensation, which suggests averaging the State's three highest cost benefit years to gauge the amount of reserve funds necessary;
- Increase the taxable wage base; and
- Use an array system to determine employers' experience rating.

A majority of the Commission (five out of the nine voting members) made the following additional recommendations:

- Attain a Fund balance of \$233,900,000 by the year 2003--enough money to cover 12 months of benefit payments at ACUC levels;
- Raise the taxable wage base to \$12,000;
- Implement a schedule in the first year the array system is used to cushion the significant increases in employer tax rates that could otherwise result;
- Increase total employer taxes by approximately 36.1% annually;
- Maintain the existing 6.0% reduction in maximum benefit amounts;
- Eliminate the seasonality exclusion, so that qualifying seasonal employees may collect unemployment insurance benefits;
- Eliminate the requirement that individuals seek full-time work in order to be eligible for unemployment benefits;
- Impose an employee tax of 0.2% per year on the first \$12,000 of wages;
- Dedicate to the Fund \$10,000,000 from the revenue generated by the cigarette tax in each of the five years beginning in 1999 and ending in 2003;
- Implement these recommendations beginning January 1, 1999, and repeal the implementing legislation December 31, 2003;

- Require the Department of Labor to collect data on the recommended changes, as well as on child care and transportation problems experienced by benefit claimants; and
- Require the Department of Labor to report to the Joint Standing Committee having jurisdiction over labor issues by January 31, 2002, regarding the data collected and the impact the changes have had on Fund solvency and the economy, so that the Committee may evaluate whether the recommended changes should be continued beyond 2003.

In contrast, three of the voting Commission members endorsed a minority report with the following recommendations:

- Increase the taxable wage base from \$7,000 to \$9,000;
- Change the weekly benefit formula from 1/22 to 1/26 of high quarter earnings;
- Reduce the maximum weekly benefit from 52% to 48% of the average weekly wage; and
- Attain a 2005 Fund balance sufficient to cover approximately six months of benefits, based on the average of Maine's three most expensive benefit cost years in the past 20 years.

Commission to Study the Use of Pharmaceuticals in Long-term Care Settings

The Commission convened on January 5, 1998 and issued its report in March, 1998. The Commission was comprised of individuals representing the Legislature, pharmacy providers, retail pharmacies, long-term care pharmacies, the Department of Human Services, recipients of long-term care services, and physicians with experience in long-term care. The Commission was chaired by Michael J. Fiori. The Commission made the following recommendations:

- Monitor contracts between long-term care facilities and consultant pharmacists to ensure compliance with federal law;
- Conduct a periodic review by the Department of Human Services of guidelines for dispensing medication under the Medicaid program;

- Review the current prohibition against paying a prescription filling fee to pharmacies that own and provide services to long-term care facilities; and
- Develop pharmaceutical core guidelines for geriatric residents in long term care facilities.

Maine Commission on Children's Health Care

The Commission convened on October 14, 1997 and was chaired by Rep. Randall Berry. The Commission was charged with assessing the current health needs of the children in the State and developing options to increase the number who are insured. The Commission recommended a twofold approach to reduce the number of uninsured children:

- Expand the Medicaid program by reducing the eligibility criteria to 150% of the federal poverty level for all children 1 through 18 years of age; and
- Create a new program called the Cub Care Program for children in families between 150% and 185% of the federal poverty level, to be paid in part by premium contributions.

The Commission also recommended the following additional approaches for the State to provide health insurance to children:

- Submit a plan to the Department of Human Services that is a combined expanded Medicaid program and a separate children's health insurance program;
- Increase the eligibility level for Medicaid to cover children 1 through 18 years of age in families with incomes below 150% of the federal poverty level;
- Continue to cover children ages birth through 12 months of age in families with incomes below 185% of the federal poverty level;
- Address the issue of "crowd-out" in the private insurance market;
- Allow the purchase of Cub Care insurance for families whose incomes rise above program eligibility levels by paying a premium; and

- Add a full-time health policy administration position within the Bureau of Medical Services and 30 full-time positions within the Bureau of Family Independence.

Joint Select Committee to Oversee Maine Yankee Atomic Power Company

The Joint Select Committee was formed by the Legislature in response to both Maine Yankee Atomic Power Company's announcement that it would close unless a buyer was found and the uncertainty this announcement created. The Committee met August, 1997 through January, 1998, and held a public hearing in Wiscasset on the decommissioning of Maine Yankee Atomic Power Company. The Committee found that the federal Department of Energy's expected failure to meet its obligations under both federal law and the Department of Energy's contract to take possession of Maine Yankee's spent fuel would constitute gross nonfeasance. The Committee made recommendations in the following areas:

- Direct State agencies and Maine Yankee to continue their efforts to force the Department of Energy to meet its obligations;
- Coordinate State agencies' efforts in monitoring, regulating and overseeing matters related to Maine Yankee;
- Refer matters related to Maine Yankee to the Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy for legislative review; and
- Direct the Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy to continue to monitor and oversee the developments at Maine Yankee.

Joint Select Committee on Research and Development

The Joint Select Committee was created to review current policies regarding applied research and development in the State and to recommend a plan to support applied research in aquaculture and marine sciences, biotechnology, composite materials engineering, environmental sciences and technology, and information sciences and technology. The

Committee was comprised of fourteen Legislators and was co-chaired by Sen. Richard Bennett and Sen. Mary Cathcart. The Committee made the following recommendations:

- Appropriate \$10 million to the Maine Economic Improvement Fund to support research and development within the UMaine system;
- Support a \$20 million bond issue to build research and development capacity in the for-profit, non-profit and academic sectors;
- Expand the Seed Capitol Tax Credit to make investments and more businesses eligible for the credit; and
- Create a legislative Joint Select Committee on Science and Technology to provide the Legislature with the continuing ability to plan, oversee and encourage the use of science and technology to improve the State's economy.

Select Committee to Study the Health Effects of Reformulated Gasoline

The Select Committee was composed of five Legislators and met five times between July and December of 1997. The Committee held three public hearings in three different geographic locations of the State. The Committee was co-chaired by Sen. Phillip Harriman and Rep. Verdi Tripp. The Committee found that there is an enormous amount of complex and often contradictory information available regarding reformulated gas and one of its components, MTBE. A majority of the Committee made the following recommendations:

- Encourage research on the development of alternatives to MTBE as the oxygenate of choice;
- Recommend the consideration of the use of public research funds or tax incentives for the development of alternative fuel blends;
- Direct the Department of Human Services, Bureau of Health to conduct a study of the levels of MTBE in gasoline and tertiary-butyl alcohol in blood of humans and animal carcasses;

- Support the adoption of a legally enforceable primary drinking water standard for MTBE in public water systems by the Department of Health and Human Services; and
- Direct members of the Select Committee in conjunction with the Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources to continue to monitor and report on issues surrounding the use of reformulated gasoline.

The Committee also found that the lack of consensus on issues relating to RFG and the amount of new information emerging as a result of studying RFG justify continued study in the public's best interest.

Special Committee to Review the Study Commission Process

The Special Committee was convened by Speaker of the House Elizabeth H. Mitchell in November, 1997 to review the study commission process and develop recommendations by January, 1998 for improving the process. The Committee made the following recommendations:

- Reaffirm legislative policy that the primary purpose of legislative studies is to assist legislators in making policy decisions;
- Return to the use of joint standing and joint select committees as principal study committees;
- Establish studies through study orders;
- Require that appointments of study commission members and chairs be made by the Presiding Officers;
- Keep the size of study commissions manageable;
- Compensate members of study commissions equitably;
- Conclude studies prior to the start of legislative sessions;
- Fund studies through an appropriation from the General Fund;

- Establish a formal study table in the Senate;
- Require that staff be provided by the Legislative Council for legislative studies;
- Require studies to be convened by the office responsible for staffing the study;
- Direct the study commissions and study commissions' staff to manage study expenses;
- Provide formal guidance for drafting study orders and legislation; and
- Specify the study commission process in the joint rules and in Legislative Council policies.

Task Force on Improving Access to Prescription Drugs for the Elderly

The Task Force convened on December 4, 1997 and was chaired by Sen. Chellie Pingree. The Task Force was charged with determining and recommending methods of improving access to prescription drugs for the elderly. The Task Force met four times and made the following recommendations:

- Improve public education and outreach efforts for the current Elderly Low-Cost Drug program;
- Direct the Department of Human Services to seek a Medicaid waiver from the Federal Health Care Financing Administration to provide Medicaid prescription drug benefits for persons 62 years of age and older whose income is up to 185% of the federal poverty level;
- Expand the existing Elderly Low-Cost Drug Program by increasing the income ceiling to 185% of the federal poverty level until a federal waiver is granted; and
- Request that the Joint Standing Committee on Banking and Insurance, the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, and the Bureau of Insurance work together to develop methods of providing financial assistance or insurance coverage for prescription drugs for organ transplant patients.

Task Force to Study Equal Economic Opportunity in All Regions of the State

The Task Force convened on October 30, 1997 and included Legislators, members of regional development agencies, representatives from the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Land Use Regulation Commission, and members of the public. The Task Force was chaired by Rep. Mark Vigue. The Task Force made the following recommendations:

- Create an Economic Opportunity Advisory Committee to monitor economic development disparities within the State;
- Improve the State transportation infrastructure, including the issuance of a \$1.7 million transportation bond to extend I-95 north from Houlton through Aroostook County;
- Improve the State telecommunications infrastructure, including ensuring affordable, reliable telecommunications in rural areas of the State;
- Improve business development in the State, including the development and implementation of an economic development marketing plan;
- Expand state and regional efforts at economic development, including the addition of a new level of reimbursement under the Employment Tax Increment Financing program to encourage job creation in areas where unemployment is 50% greater than the State average; and
- Encourage Congress to re-examine federal issues affecting economic development, including the Davis-Bacon wage rate calculations for federal projects, the freight carrying limitations of the Jones Act, and passage of the United States Cruise Ship Tourism Act of 1997.

Task Force to Study the Cost-Effectiveness of the Child Development Services System

The Task Force convened on November 21, 1997 and was chaired by Sen. Peggy Pendleton. The Task Force was comprised of sixteen members, including

four Legislators, state department representatives, contract service providers, parents, a Child Development Services (CDS) site director, a CDS board member, a public school Special Education Director and a community health nurse. The Task Force made the following recommendations:

- Develop and use a common form and methodology for reporting information to be used in determining the cost to regional CDS sites of employing professional therapists;
- Direct the Department of Education to develop and implement a quality assurance initiative for the CDS system;
- Recommend regional CDS sites make available to parents information on current contract and site employee service providers available in the region; and
- Direct regional site boards to monitor and address the excessively high case manager workloads.

The Task Force also found that a stronger effort at collaboration among public agencies in CDS regions would result in more efficiency in the provision of services.

Task Force to Study the Feasibility of a Single Claims Processing System for 3rd-party Payors of Health Care Benefits

The Task Force convened on October 28, 1997 and included Legislators and individuals representing the interests of the Bureau of Insurance, the Department of Human Services, physicians, pharmacists, community mental health providers, home health care providers, hospitals, nonprofit hospitals and medical service organizations, commercial insurers and employers. The Task Force was charged with exploring both the feasibility of a single claims processing system for third-party payors of health care benefits and the feasibility of streamlining the current claims processing system used by payors. The Task Force declined to develop both a model for the single claims processing system for the State and a state-mandated single claims processing system. The Task Force made the following recommendations:

- Focus efforts at improving the current claims processing system on front-end processing;

- Encourage providers and payors to use technology to access private health information networks or claims clearinghouses to simplify the submission of claims;
- Re-evaluate the role of state government in improving claims processing system after federal administrative simplification provisions are adopted and implemented; and
- Reconvene a study of the current claims processing system after the 119th Legislature.

The Task Force also found that issues related to the confidentiality of health information in electronic claims processing are being addressed adequately.



Term Limit Cases Update

California's Lifetime Ban on Term Limits Upheld By Federal Appeals Court

In a December 19, 1997 decision, a special panel of the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a 1990 California initiative that imposed a lifetime ban on running for the Legislature after a legislator had served two three-year terms in the Assembly or two four-year terms in the Senate. The 9-2 decision by the 11-judge panel, reversed a 2-1 decision in October by the same appeals court. The majority opinion held that the term limits approved by voters in 1990 were "not severe" and rejected arguments that they should be overturned because the lifetime ban was unconstitutional. Judge David Thompson wrote that "California voters apparently perceived lifetime term limits for elected officials as a means to promote democracy by opening up the political process and restoring competitive elections." This ruling reversed the court's previous ruling that the law was unconstitutional on the grounds that it "failed to provide adequate notice to voters that it would

severely burden the people's fundamental rights by imposing a lifetime ban."

The Federal Appeals Court's decision was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. On March 23, 1998, the Supreme Court upheld the Federal Appeals Court's decision.

Other states that have lifetime term limit bans are: Arkansas, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, Oklahoma and Oregon.

Colorado's "Scarlett Letter" Term Limit Provision is Found Unconstitutional

The Colorado Supreme Court unanimously ruled against a voter approved constitutional amendment that directed state and congressional representatives to support a term limits amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The Colorado provision, Amendment 12, also instructed non-incumbent candidates to sign a pledge to support term limits. Legislators or candidates who failed to follow these directives would be identified on primary and general election ballots with the words "disregarded voter instructions on term limits" or "declined to take pledge to support term limits" next to their names. In its ruling, the court stated that "our holding should not be read as a condemnation of congressional term limits. Instead, we conclude that the manner in which Amendment 12 seeks to accomplish that objective violates Article V of the United States Constitution because its attempts to usurp our elected representatives' exclusive authority to amend the United States Constitution using explicit mandate and coercion. By completely taking away our elected representatives' discretion in fulfilling this constitutional duty, Amendment 12 runs contrary to the principle of representative government."

Other states that have passed "Scarlet Letter" provisions include Alabama, Arkansas, Idaho, Maine, Montana, Nevada, Nebraska, and Wyoming.

Maine's "Scarlet Letter" Law was ruled unconstitutional by the U.S. District Court in May 1997. The federal District Court found that the Act's ballot labeling provisions effectively coerced Maine's elected officials in violation of Article V of the U.S. Constitution.

Did You Know?.....



Mainers took part in the first naval battle of the Revolutionary War. On June 12, 1775, Machias rebels captured the British schooner *Margaretta*. The Machias group also captured two more British vessels that had been sent to investigate the fate of the *Margaretta*.



Some of Maine's towns and geographic features have borrowed their names from cities of foreign countries. Rome, Sidney, Stockholm, Vienna, Paris, and Belgrade are some examples. Other Maine names were borrowed from much closer locations. An examination of a detailed map of the State reveals that in Maine there are 65 different Mud Ponds, 47 Meadow Brooks and 46 Long Ponds.

WHO'S USING THE WEB?

Since the World Wide Web has become so popular in recent years, it is interesting to look at use statistics in the US.

The following statistics offer a glimpse of the educational backgrounds of current Web users in the US:

High school or less	27%
Some college	32%
College graduate	23%
Post-graduate	18%

Source: Business Week



Policy and Government

The National Marine Fisheries Service: The NMFS is part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which is housed within the US Department of Commerce. The site includes access to NMFS's headquarters, regional offices, regional fishery management councils, and major federal fisheries legislation.

<http://kingfish.ssp.nmfs.gov/>

Thomas: Federal legislation from 1973 to present, as well as links to other governmental information.

<http://thomas.loc.gov/>

Provides links to "hot" topics in government by subject.

<http://thomas.loc.gov/home/html.arc/hot-subj.html>

US Electronic Commerce Policy: This site is maintained by the Secretariat for Electronic Commerce within the US Department of Commerce. It offers a federal framework for global electronic commerce, as well as other useful information.

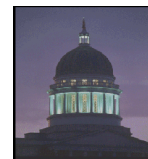
<http://www.ecommerce.gov/>

Internet Legal Resource Guide: This guide is a comprehensive compilation of legal resources available on the Web. Provides access to all on-line law journals and professional organizations, CLE information and practice areas.

<http://www.ilrg.com/>

United States Code: Search the federal statutes in force as of January 16, 1996 by title. Also assists with tracking recent amendments to the U.S. Code.

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>



Maine State Legislature:

The State of Maine statutes, including the new laws passed in 1997, are now available through the Legislature's homepage. The website also now includes access to current bill text and amendments. The latest addition to the Legislature's website is the Legislative Information Office.

<http://www.state.me.us/legis>



Technology

HotWired: This on-line magazine offers seemingly endless information on the Web. It provides how-to information for Web use and webpage design. Although much of this page's content is geared to detailed technical topics, it does offer simple, straightforward advice on many of the basics.

<http://www.hotwired.com/>



News

ECOLA News: Newspapers, magazines and computer publications from around the world. The search engine allows users to search by publication title. English language only.

<http://www.ecola.com/>

Los Angeles Times: This well-known paper is an excellent source for state and local government happenings in California, as well as other west coast states. The Times site has user-friendly pull-down menus to assist with topic selection.

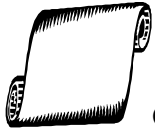
<http://www.latimes.com/>



General Interest

Maine Appalachian Trail Club: Soon it will once again be hiking and camping season for warm weather outdoors enthusiasts. Find out what's happening on Maine's section of the AT, including volunteer opportunities, group activities and current issues discussions.

<http://www.matc.org/>



OPLA PUBLICATIONS

A list of study reports by legislative committees and study commissions, categorized by year, is available from OPLA. For printed copies of any of these publications, please contact the Office of Policy and Legal Analysis at 13 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333 (287-1670) or stop by Rooms 101/107 of the State House. Legislators and members of the public may request a copy at no charge. Additional copies of the publications are available at a nominal cost.

The following current publications are now available:

- **Final Report of the Joint Select Committee to Study Research and Development -February 1998**
- Final Report of the Joint Select Committee to Oversee Maine Yankee Atomic Power Company - *January 1998*
- **Final Report of the Blue Ribbon Commission to Study the Effects of Governmental Regulation and Health Insurance Costs on Small Businesses in Maine - January 1998**
- Final Report of the Commission to Determine the Adequacy of Services to Persons with Mental Retardation - *January 1998*
- **Final Report of the Commission to Study the Funding and Distribution of Teletypewriters and Other Telecommunications Equipment for People with Disabilities - February 1998**
- Final Report of the Commission to Study the Unemployment Compensation System - *February 1998*
- **Final Report of the Commission to Study the Use of Pharmaceuticals in Long-Term Care Settings - March 1998**
- Final Report of the Maine Commission on Children's Health Care - *January 1998*
- **Final Report of the Task Force on Improving Access to Prescription Drugs for the Elderly - February 1998**
- Final Report of the Task Force to Study Equal Economic Opportunity for All Regions of the State - *January 1998*
- **Final Report of the Task Force to Study the Cost Effectiveness of the Child Development Services System - February 1998**
- Final Report of the Task Force to Study the Feasibility of a Single Claims Processing System for 3rd-party Payors of Health Care Benefits - *January 1998*
- **Final Report of the Subcommittee on the Scope of Juvenile Justice Problems and Services in Maine - February 1998**
- Final Report of the Select Committee to Study the Health Effects of Reformulated Gasoline - *December 1997*

In addition, many of the reports issued by study commissions staffed by OPLA during the 117th and 118th Legislature are available on the OPLA website at: <http://www.state.me.us/legis/opla>

A Word About OPLA

The Office of Policy and Legal Analysis (OPLA) is one of several nonpartisan offices of the Maine State Legislature. It operates under the auspices of the Legislative Council. The office provides professional staff assistance to the joint standing and select committees, including the provision of policy and legal research and analysis, coordination of the committee process, bill and amendment drafting, statutory analysis of budget bills in cooperation with the Office of Fiscal and Program Review and preparation of legislative proposals, reports and recommendations.

OPLA Mission

The Office of Policy and Legal Analysis assists, in a nonpartisan and responsive manner, the Maine Legislature, its committees and its members in fulfilling the Legislature's mission by providing objective information, impartial legal and policy analysis, and assisting in formulating and drafting legislative proposals, reports and recommendations.

OPLA~Notes

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We welcome your comments and suggestions.

Contact the Office of Policy and Legal Analysis by writing to 13 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333; calling 287-1670; or stopping by Rooms 101/107/135 of the State House.

